

THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF LOTHINGLAND.

A N N U A L R E P O R T

on the

H E A L T H

of the,

R U R A L D I S T R I C T O F L O T H I N G L A N D

for the year

1954.

by: ARTHUR C. GEE M.B.C.S. L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Mr. Chairman, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit the Annual Report on the health of your district for the year 1954.

Of the various matters which have occupied the attention of the Health Department the problem of well water cyanosis deserves first consideration, and I feel that members of the Committee may be interested in a short outline of this problem and the steps which have been taken to counteract it.

In April 1951 there appeared in the "Lancet" an article by Mary C. Ewing and R.M. Mayon-White of the West Suffolk General Hospital describing two cases of cyanosis in infants, one of which subsequently died. The cause of this cyanosis was ascribed to the use of well water heavily contaminated with nitrates for making up these infants' bottle feeds. About the same time a similar case occurred in this vicinity.

A scheme was started by the County Medical Officer to ensure that any infant likely to be bottle fed from a water supply drawn from wells should not run the risk of becoming ill from this cause. In co-operation with Dr. Eric Wood, the Norwich Public Analyst, arrangements were made for testing such well water for their nitrate content.

This scheme has now been in operation for a couple of years or so and as it is not proving easy to administer satisfactorily, I would like to take this opportunity of outlining some of the difficulties that are being met, in the hope that wider publicity may be given to the scheme. It is felt that if all concerned knew more about this matter, greater co-operation would help towards overcoming some of these troubles.

At present the procedure is as follows:-

Information is sent to the Health Department by the District Midwives regarding coming confinements, and on the report submitted an indication as to the nature of the water supply is given. In those cases where the supply is from a well, the district Sanitary Inspectors take samples which are submitted to the Public Analyst for testing for their nitrate content. In those cases where this is found to be at a dangerously high level, this fact is noted and, should the mother subsequently have to bottle feed her new born child, arrangements have to be made for a supply of safe water.

Difficulties arise at each stage of this procedure. In the first place a number of mothers are not confined by the district midwives - instead they may enter a Nursing Home or Maternity Hospital in the district and be subsequently returned to their own

homes without the knowledge of the Health Department, and if well water is the only source of supply at their home, danger may arise because there has been no opportunity to test it.

Similarly, in cases of emergency, Doctors may refer cases directly to Hospital and again, this information is not supplied to the Health Department. It will be appreciated, too, that this scheme has put a great burden on the District Sanitary Inspectors, particularly where the information is not supplied sufficiently early for a schedule of testing to be worked out. An indication of the amount of work involved is given by the fact that during the past year 73 samples have been taken.

Steps are being taken to close the gaps in this scheme and, in this connection, I would like to say that great help could be given by mothers notifying the midwives as early as possible of their coming confinements, and by general practitioners who conduct cases themselves letting the Health Department know whether or not they wish to have their patients' water supplies checked. We ourselves have discussed the matter with the hospitals and arrangements recently made with them should remove any difficulty in that direction.

Well water cyanosis only affects new born infants. The fact that a water supply has been found to be dangerous in this connection does not necessarily mean that it is dangerous from bacterial or other forms of pollution rendering it unsafe for older children or adults.

This problem will, of course, be solved once the rural district water supplies cover the area adequately. As members of the Committee will know, considerable progress has been made during the year in the extension of the water mains to the rural areas. However, only 77 new connections have been made to the mains in Bradwell, 35 in Burgh Castle, 23 in Wangford, 15 in Uggheshall, 6 in Barnby and 5 in Henham. It is hoped that all householders will avail themselves of the supply of safe water now available to them. There seems to be a tendency for the inhabitants of some of these villages to clamour for amenities such as water supplies and sewerage and yet when they are provided at great expense, there is a notable reluctance to use them.

There has been a rise in the Birth Rate this year for the first time since 1949. The death rate remains much the same and the adjusted rate is well below the average for the country as a whole. Of the causes of death, those associated with diseases of the heart and arteries far exceed any other cause.

Measles continued to be the most troublesome of the infectious diseases, with whooping cough a close second.

Apart from these two, the district can be said to have been almost free from infectious disease.

A welcome addition to the Department was the appointment of Mr. G.A. Boanas who joined the staff on November 1st in the capacity of Additional Sanitary Inspector. A perusal of the Sanitary Inspector's report herewith will reveal what a volume of work in this sphere has been carried through, and this appointment will help very materially in expediting the Sanitary work of the district.

I am, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlement,

Your obedient servant,

ARTHUR C. GEE.

Medical Officer of Health.

General Statistics:

Area	44,653 acres
Registrar-General's estimate population (mid-1954)	15,190
Number of inhabited houses as at 31st December, 1954	5,220
Rateable Value as at 31st December, 1954	£69,783

Vital Statistics:

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<u>LIVE BIRTHS</u> Legitimate	212	108	104
Illegitimate	<u>15</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>6</u>
	<u>227</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>110</u>

	<u>Lothingland</u>	<u>Comparative figure for England & Wales.</u>
Birth Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population mid-1954	14.9 (Crude) 16.8 (Adjusted)	15.2

STILLBIRTHS

<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
2	1	1

DEATHS per 1,000 estimated population	11.5 (Crude) 9.5 (Adjusted)	11.3
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DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER
ONE YEAR OF AGE

<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
3	3	-

Causes of Death.

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Syphilitic disease	-	1	1
Infective and parasitic diseases	-	1	1
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	4	-	4
Malignant neoplasm, lungs	3	2	5
Malignant neoplasm, breast	-	4	4
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	-	1	1
Other malignant & lymphatic neoplasms	17	6	23
Vascular lesions of the nervous system	12	15	27
Coronary diseases	14	13	27
Hypertension with heart diseases	3	1	4
Other heart disease	6	18	24
Other circulatory disease	9	5	14
Pneumonia	1	1	2
Bronchitis	2	1	3
Ulcer of Stomach and duodenum	1	0	1
Nephritis and nephrosis	2	1	3
Hyperplasia of prostate	3	-	3
Other defined and ill-defined disease	11	6	17
Accidents (other than motor)	5	4	9
Suicide	2	-	2
	<u>95</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>175</u>

Comparative Table for the past five years:

	<u>1950</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1952</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1954</u>
Population	14,400	15,090	14,960	15,040	15,190
Births	210	219	194	194	227
Birth Rate per 1000 ..	14.9	14.4	13.0	12.9	14.9
Deaths	165	170	164	149	175
Death Rate per 1000 ..	11.4	11.3	11.0	9.9	11.5
Infant Deaths	7	10	3	4	3
Infant Mortality Rate	33.3	45.6	15.5	20.6	-

INFANT WELFARE CENTRES.

The following table shows the attendances at the various Infant Welfare Centres for the year. Figures for 1953 are shown in brackets:

	Carlton Colville	Kessingland	Wrentham	Somerleyton, Belton and District
No. of Children who first attended during the year				
(a) Under 1 year	14 (12)	26 (17)	5 (27)	91 (61)
(b) 1 - 5 years	16 (13)	8 (10)	14 (31)	171 (8)
Total attendances:				
(a) Under 1 year	78 (108)	141 (95)	15 (104)	254 (324)
(b) 1 - 5 years	159 (213)	158 (126)	38 (186)	595 (880)

HOME HELP SERVICE:

The number of requests for Home Helps continues to rise, and 37 cases have been assisted during the course of the year. Due to the distance involved and the scattered population, it is not as easy to provide an efficient Home Help Service as is the case in the town, and we have been hard put on numerous occasions to find a Home Help located within a reasonable distance of the householder requesting assistance. We should, therefore, be very pleased to hear of any women who are anxious to take up this work, as we are so short of Home Helps in the Rural Districts.

Analysis of Help Provided

	Maternity	Tuberculosis	Old Age	Sickness
No. of cases assisted:	10	-	12	15
Hours worked:	440	-	1,870	3,671

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The following table shows the incidence of Infectious Disease throughout the year in the various parishes:-

P A R I S H	Measles	Whooping Cough	Scarlet Fever	Pneumonia	Erysipelas	Infective Hepatitis	Puerperal Pyrexia
Barnby	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Belton	28	-	-	-	-	-	-
Benacre	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bradwell	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Burgh Castle	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carlton Colville	-	2	4	1	-	1	-
Corton	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Easton Bavents	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Flixton	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fritton	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gisleham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Herringfleet	1	1	-	-	1	-	-
Kessingland	6	3	-	1	-	-	-
Lound	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mutford	2	-	1	-	-	-	-
Oulton	-	-	4	-	-	-	1
Reydon	42	35	-	7	-	-	-
Somerleyton	3	-	-	1	-	-	-
South Cove	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uggeshall	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Wangford	8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wrentham	6	7	-	1	-	-	-
1954	114	49	9	12	1	1	2
1953	30	33	18	8	2	1	2
1952	257	10	3	7	1	2	1

REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR FOR THE YEAR 1954.

Mr. Chairman, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present a report upon the work of the Department for the year 1954.

Housing

Provision of New Housing Accommodation

Houses erected by private enterprise	58
Houses erected by the Local Authority	78

Housing Surveys

Total number of houses inspected during the year for all purposes	294
Total number of houses found to be unsatisfactory	181
Number of houses still occupied for human habitation (either under licence or otherwise) and in respect of which demolition or clearance orders have been made	8

Summary of Action Taken

Informal: Number of dwelling-houses rendered fit as a result of informal action 46

Formal: Public Health Acts

(a) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	13
(b) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which defects were remedied after service of formal notices	
By Owners	4
By local authority in default of owners	10

Formal: Housing Acts.

(a) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which repair notices were served	-
(b) Number of dwelling-houses rendered fit as a result of notices served	-
(c) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which demolition orders were made:	
Individually unfit	8
In Clearance Areas	-
(d) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of orders made:	
Individually unfit	4
In Clearance Areas	-
(e) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made	18

Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954.

The Survey of all houses required by this Act was commenced in order that proposals may be submitted on the action to be taken regarding unfit houses which are not repairable at reasonable expense.

Moveable Dwellings.

Licences were granted to the owners of 21 sites for caravans and tents and a total of 580 moveable dwellings were approved for use in the District. 82 visits were made to these sites and the conditions included in annual licences regarding sanitary facilities resulted in major improvements being made at ten camping sites. Six applications for licences were refused due to lack of proper water supply and sanitary facilities.

WATER SUPPLY.

Samples from private wells and new mains for bacteriological examination were despatched to the Public Health Laboratory at Norwich and the reports were as follows:

Highly satisfactory	25
Satisfactory	13
Suspicious	7
Unsatisfactory	44

Samples for chemical and bacteriological examination taken from Kessingland Water Tower and the Nordals well were reported by the Public Analyst to be very suitable for drinking and general purposes but he again drew attention to the increase in salinity of the Nordals well which occurs when it is being fully operated in the summer.

73 samples of well water for examination for nitrate content were submitted to the Public Analyst and he reported on the safety of these waters for infant feeding.

MEAT INSPECTION.

The Ministry of Food control of slaughtering ceased in June and the premises which had been used at Benacre were closed. In the weeks before this happened discussions took place with representatives of the meat traders and members of adjoining authorities. There was little guidance from the Ministry on the policy to be adopted and to ensure the continuance of meat supplies throughout the district, the Council were given no alternative but to approve the re-opening of private slaughterhouses.

Eight licences were granted subject to the premises being repaired or improved, as required to conform with the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act. The opening of these slaughterhouses and the recommendation of the Ministry that all animals killed must be inspected was the cause of considerable overtime being worked in the evenings, at weekends and during public holidays. With the co-operation of neighbouring Councils assistance was received in carrying out this service from the Sanitary Inspectors of the Boroughs of Lowestoft and Southwold.

The quality of animals killed was very good and the meat traders have helped in matters appertaining to inspection, and accepted the decisions of the Inspectors at all times, so that it was not necessary to resort to formal seizure of any meat or offal.

Number of Animals

Inspected	Cattle	Calves	Sheep	Pigs
	895	124	1239	4579

Tuberculosis only

Number of whole carcasses and offals condemned	3	-	-	2
Number of carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	63	-	-	107
Percentage of carcasses affected with tuberculosis	7.4%	-	-	2.4%

Diseases other than tuberculosis

Number of whole carcasses and offals condemned	-	6	1	9
Number of carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	244	-	-	244
Percentage of carcasses affected with diseases other than tuberculosis	27.4%	4.8%	.08%	5.5%

The total weight of meat condemned amounted to 13,617 lbs.

Diseased meat and offals other than certain livers are collected and processed without delay by the Suffolk Fat & Bone Co. at the factory premises at Oulton Broad. Suitable livers such as those affected with parasites were collected and used by a local breeder for feeding mink. This arrangement continued after decontrol with payment made to the Council for meat and offal surrendered to the Inspectors.

FOOD PREPARING PREMISES.

The following premises are registered under the provisions of the Food & Drugs Act, 1938, Section 14:

Ice cream manufacturers	1
Ice cream retailers	45
Sausage and preserved food manufacturers	10

Some improvements were recommended and carried out at these premises and in three cases washing facilities including the provision of hot and cold water were installed for the use of persons employed.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Refuse collection work was carried out by the Council's staff in all parishes using two side loading ten cubic yard capacity vehicles. The collection service for house refuse every week in six parishes and every fortnight in the remainder of the district continued. The extra work at the holiday camps in the summer was carried out by working regular overtime. The refuse was disposed of by tipping on land adjoining the sewage works at Reydon, on land in Carlton Colville and by arrangement on the tips of the Lowestoft Borough Council.

Nightsoil is collected each week in the Parish of Kessingland by the cesspool emptying vehicles.

The Council provides a free service for the emptying of private cesspools and the use of this system of drainage in some new buildings together with the extension of water mains and the consequent increase in the use of water in existing properties made it difficult to meet the demand for this service. During the winter months access to many cesspools is difficult and the sewage has to be pumped over distances up to 80 yards. The disposal of this sewage gives rise to many problems and without the co-operation of local farmers and nurserymen the costs of this work would be considerably increased.

Three cesspool emptying vehicles are in use. It was found possible to reduce the staff by one man so that there are three drivers and one mate employed.

There is no prospect of any reduction in this work until the new sewerage schemes which are so urgently needed are commenced, and on completion connections must be made and the cesspools cut off from the drainage systems.

FACTORIES AND WORKPLACES.

31 inspections were made of these premises and it was not found necessary to issue any notices regarding defects.

RODENT CONTROL.

Test baiting was carried out in the Reydon, Kessingland and Corton sewerage systems in co-operation with a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and no evidence of rat infestation was found.

The following work was carried out:

	Type of property			
	Local Authority	Dwelling houses	Business Premises	Agricultural
Inspections	7	557	34	65
Number of infested properties treated	7	506	32	58

I am, My Lord, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

RALPH GROAT.

Sanitary Inspector.